

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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URGENT  
INFORMATION

August 7, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM:

Phil Odeen *PO*

SUBJECT:

DIA Assessment of Air  
Campaign in North Vietnam

DIA has responded well to my informal suggestions on ways to improve its twice-a-month assessment of the air campaign. The latest issue (Tab A) has a particularly useful balanced, four page overall assessment and a two page comparison of this campaign with 1965-68.

Comparing Linebacker with Rolling Thunder DIA points out:

- Linebacker has imposed a greater burden on NVN.
- Damage has been inflicted much quicker, limiting NVN's ability to offset it.
- This campaign has destroyed as much POL storage capacity (22 percent) in 10 weeks as the earlier campaign did in nearly a year.
- The level of electric power disruption (75 percent not operating) achieved by June was not accomplished during the earlier campaign until mid-1967.
- The graduated approach of the 1965-68 campaign allowed NVN to mobilize its labor (400,000-500,000 men), stockpile materials and execute repairs quickly. This time the North was not prepared and has not had time to mobilize for the greater repair effort.
- Coastal shipping was not stopped earlier as it is now and since the ports were not closed earlier, there was less pressure on the LOC to China which is more effectively interdicted now.

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DIA review completed.

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Other points in the latest assessment are:

-- POL. Because POL has been flowing through the first new pipeline from China despite strikes on the line and associated facilities, there was no reduction in POL stocks in the second half of July. A second pipeline will probably be completed in August, and POL stocks may then rise although there will still be distribution problems south of Hanoi.

-- MR-I Battlefield. There is now evidence of rice shortages with the enemy giving rice transport priority even over ammunition. However, the earlier large calibre ammunition shortages have been overcome with some ammunition trucked direct from the Chinese border to Quang Tri.

-- Northeast LOC. NVN is making a great effort to keep the Northeast LOC open. One key rail bridge which had been repaired twice was recently knocked out for the third time. However, there are numerous by-passes on the roads and supplies are getting through despite disruption and congestion. Much extra manpower is required, however.

-- Panhandle LOC. We are complicating movement. Watercraft move only at night. The rail line is out. We hit some trucks with air and naval fire.

-- Problems in China. There is evidence of Chinese port and rail congestion as cargos being unloaded for NVN are not being cleared quickly from the port and there is a backup on the rails because of limited ability of NVN to take over cargo at the border.

I plan to discuss the latest issue with DLA, pointing up areas where further improvement is possible as well as complimenting them for the latest effort.

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